



When crops have been planted in the same soil year after year, they use up most of the soil's nitrogen. When this valuable food is lacking in the soil, only weak plants or none at all will grow. A wise farmer puts plant food back into his soil by adding fertilizer to it. Commercial fertilizer is made by adding nitrate to other plant foods. For a long time the world's supply of nitrate came almost entirely from Chile's nitrate beds.

Nitrate is also used in the manufacture of explosives and in making the medicine iodine. Nitrate is even valuable in making some dyes. In recent years men have learned how to make nitrate from the nitrogen in the air and from waste products of factories and smelters. Now that we are manufacturing much of the nitrate that we use, we do not buy such large quantities of it from Chile.

cannot grow any of our food. It is all shipped to us. Our water comes through pipes from the melting snows of the Andes. For a long time we did not have running water. We had to haul water long distances by mule or oxcart. This was very expensive. Each gallon cost several dollars in your money.

"Living here is not as pleasant as it is in our homes in central Chile. We get homesick for green, growing things. On this desert we can grow only what can be planted in some type of flowerpot. These plants must be watered often and kept away from the burning sun. We always welcome vacation time. It lasts for several months and enables us to return to our homes."

White lakes of borax. Great quantities of borax also come from the northern part of Chile. Borax covers some parts of Chile like snow. Huge blocks of this